

The various drills required were performed smartly, but certain suggestions made during previous inspections with the object of making the practice drill more efficient had not been carried out.

The following interim report was forwarded to the secretary of the Board, and covers the second inspection :—

“ SIR,— “ Office of Inspector of Fire Brigades, Wellington, 27th April, 1911.
“ I held an inspection of the Petone Fire Brigade on Tuesday evening, the 25th instant, and in connection therewith beg to submit the following for the consideration of your Board :—

“ Of the total strength of the brigade—viz., 19—there were present the Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, 12 firemen, and 2 messengers, or 16 in all ; of the remaining 3, 1 was sick, 1 on leave, and 1 absent. The attendance was satisfactory, and the various drills were carried out smartly and efficiently.

“ To test the fire-alarm installation a false alarm was sent in from the Queen Street box. The system up to the ringing of the main firebell was in good order, but at that point the chain working the motor-valve slipped off the wheel when the valve was only partly opened. It was tried a second time with the same result. To obviate this fault it will be necessary to replace the wheel by one with a deeper and wider groove.

“ A couple of collapsible buckets should be provided for each reel. A new nozzle is required for one of the hand-pumps. The present one is of too large a diameter, with the result that the pump will not throw a stream of water more than 7 or 8 ft.

“ The maximum pressure of water registered on the gauge at the fire-station and direct from the reservoir from 7.15 p.m. until 8.45 p.m. did not show more than 80 lb., and I understand it very rarely now rises above 85 lb. This is an average drop of 10 lb. to the square inch from what obtained, say, two years ago. This matter, that appears to be a gradual fall, should be inquired into with the view of improving the pressure, which is now falling below what is adequate.

“ I have again to call the attention of your Board to the necessity of erecting a new fire-station to contain a set of married quarters and sleeping-accommodation for a number of single firemen.

“ I have, &c.,

“ THOS. T. HUGO,

“ Inspector of Fire Brigades.”

With reference to the last paragraph of the above report, the present time is a favourable opportunity to secure a suitable site for the proposed new Central Fire-station, and the land necessary for that purpose should be purchased whilst it can be obtained at a reasonable price.

The plant and appliances are maintained in good order and condition.

Twelve fires have occurred in the Petone Fire District during the past year, as against 13 for the previous year, a decrease of 1.

The fire loss amounted to £3,719, compared with £2,266, an increase of £1,453.

The estimated cost of the brigade for the year 1911–12 is £762 6s. 7d., as against £657 7s. 5d. for the year 1910–11, an increase of £104 19s. 2d.

WHANGAREI.

Two inspections of the Whangarei Fire Brigade and its equipment have been held—7th December, 1910, and 10th May, 1911, respectively.

At the first inspection there were present the Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, and 17 firemen, with 1 on leave, all accounted for. Second inspection : Present, Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, and 15 firemen, with 1 sick, 1 on leave, and 1 short on roll—total strength accounted for. These attendances were very satisfactory.

The present strength of the brigade is 20 all told. Plant and appliances are maintained in good order and condition.

Considerable improvement in the drill was manifest upon the occasion of my last visit ; the required work was carried out with more method and in a steadier manner than on previous occasions.

A couple of branches and some 1 in. nozzles are required.

The attention of the Superintendent was directed to certain minor matters that required attending to. I have again to direct the attention of the Board to my report, dated 28th June, 1909, dealing with the method of conveying the appliances to a fire, and the installation of a street fire-alarm system.

During the year only 2 fires have occurred in the Whangarei Fire District, the same number as during the previous year.

The loss by fire amounted to £635, as against £200, an increase of £435.

The estimated cost of the brigade for the year 1911–12 is £300, compared with £250 for the year 1910–11, an increase of £50.

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